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ABSTRACT

The school superintendent for Duval County (Florida) describes his experiences in developing a school-based management organizational structure. The following elements are involved: (1) funds are allocated to schools based on needs of children in schools, (2) specific educational objectives for a school are set by people associated with the school, (3) decisions on how funds for instruction are to be spent are made in the school, (4) organization of instruction is determined at the school level, and (5) parents participate in school decision-making. The superintendent made a commitment to the school board and administration that principals would be "front line decision-makers" in the system. This commitment required a reassessment of each principal to determine competence, enthusiasm, commitment to system goals, and flexibility to change. (Author/MLF)

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SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL— WHERE DOES THE BUCK STOP?

ONE OF THE MORE OBVIOUS REALIZATIONS OF THE EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY MOVEMENT OF THE SEVENTIES IS THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE NO LONGER SOCIAL ISLANDS OR SEPARATE ENTITIES WITHIN SOCIETY. THE DECADE OF THE SEVENTIES IN EDUCATION WILL LONG BE REMEMBERED AS A TIME WHEN AN OVERLY LARGE AND GENERALLY UNRESPONSIVE AND UNPRODUCTIVE EDUCATIONAL BUREAUCRACY RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE MORE EFFECTIVELY FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH.

THESE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES HAD THEIR BEGINNINGS IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA IN 1971 WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF A 22-MEMBER CITIZENS COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION. THIS DISTINGUISHED GROUP, AFTER TWO YEARS OF INVESTIGATION AND 100,000 MAN HOURS OF RESEARCH, RECOMMENDED STATEWIDE ADOPTION OF A CONCEPT REFERRED TO AS SCHOOL-CENTERED ORGANIZATION. THE COMMITTEE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES AS CRUCIAL TO THE CONCEPT:

(1) FUNDS ARE ALLOCATED TO SCHOOLS BASED ON NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS.

(2) SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR A SCHOOL ARE SET BY PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH THE SCHOOLS.

(3) DECISIONS ON HOW FUNDS FOR INSTRUCTION ARE TO BE SPENT ARE MADE IN THE SCHOOL CENTER.

(4) ORGANIZATION OF INSTRUCTION IS DETERMINED AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL.

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(5) PARENTS PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING.

THESE FIVE PRINCIPLES PROVIDED THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MAJOR REVISION OF FLORIDA'S MINIMUM FOUNDATION PROGRAM AND THE EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1976.

ALTHOUGH NO ONE WOULD DISAGREE WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMITTEE, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT CONCEPT IN A HIGHLY CENTRALIZED, RIGID, TRADITION-BOUND URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT IS A SIGNIFICANT TASK. THE DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM WAS NOT UNLIKE MANY LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS DURING THE SIXTIES. IN 1964 DUVAL COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS WERE DISACCREDITED BY THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS. IN 1968 A STATEWIDE TEACHER WALK-OUT CREATED A NEAR CRISIS IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. IN 1969, DUVAL COUNTY BECAME EMBROILED IN THE COURT-ORDERED DESEGREGATION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MASSIVE BUSING PROGRAM. THE SIXTIES ENDED IN DISAPPOINTMENT AND A SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND CONFIDENCE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

HOWEVER, IN 1969 AS PART OF A GENERAL REORGANIZATION OF CITY GOVERNMENT THE FIRST APPOINTED SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT WAS SELECTED, ENDING A PERIOD OF POLITICAL PATRONAGE, INADEQUATE FUNDING, DECLINING TEST SCORES, AND A HIGHLY CENTRALIZED DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION.

AS NEWLY APPOINTED SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS FOR DUVAL COUNTY IN 1976, I ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE OF DEVELOPING A

REALISTIC SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. BY FAR THE MOST DIFFICULT CHANGE WAS ONE OF ATTITUDE. TRADITIONAL VALUES RELATED TO A DIRECTING ROLE FOR DISTRICT STAFF AS OPPOSED TO A SUPPORTING FUNCTION WAS DIFFICULT TO OVERCOME. "INSTITUTIONAL KINGDOMS" WHICH HAD EXISTED FOR YEARS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL HAD TO BE DISMANTLED AND STAFF REASSIGNED. JAMES LIPHAM DEFINES LEADERSHIP AS THE "INITIATION OF A NEW STRUCTURE OR PROCEDURE FOR ACCOMPLISHING AN ORGANIZATION'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ADMINISTRATOR MAY BE IDENTIFIED AS THE INDIVIDUAL WHO UTILIZES EXISTING STRUCTURES OR PROCEDURES TO ACHIEVE AN ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL OR OBJECTIVE." THIS SUBTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION IS THE KEY TO REVITALIZATION OF MANY LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS TODAY.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE IN EDUCATION THAT WE TEND TO EVOLVE IN OUR THINKING IN A DIRECTION THAT IS AWAY FROM OUR ULTIMATE GOAL, AN EDUCATED STUDENT. THE SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT CONCEPT, HOWEVER, FORCES AN ORGANIZATION TO FOCUS ITS PRIMARY EMPHASIS ON THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL AND ITS PRINCIPAL AS THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER. WE RECOGNIZE, OF COURSE, THAT SCHOOLS CONSTITUTE ORGANIZATIONAL TYPES WHICH ARE SIGNIFICANTLY AND UNIQUELY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS. LIKE INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO IDENTIFY AND PURSUE GOALS, REACT TO STRESS, ADAPT, MAINTAIN INTERNAL EQUILIBRIUM, AND ELIMINATE UNCERTAINTY. IN THIS REGARD, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PREDETERMINED GOALS AND STANDARDS WITH CORRESPONDING EVALUATIVE CRITERIA IS ESSENTIAL. STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES TEND TO RISE TO THE LEVEL OF EXPECTANCY.

ESTABLISHING EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

THE IDENTIFICATION OF MINIMUM LEVEL SKILLS AT EACH GRADE LEVEL AND THE ADOPTION OF SPECIFIC PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS INCLUDING PASSAGE OF AN APPROPRIATE SKILLS TEST SERVED TO CONCENTRATE DISTRICT RESOURCES IN OUR SYSTEM ON THE REAL GOAL, THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT. OF COURSE, THE FINAL DECISION ON THESE MATTERS CAME ONLY AFTER THE EXTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS IN THE DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW AND FIELD TEST OF THE MATERIALS.

AS SUPERINTENDENT, A COMMITMENT WAS MADE TO THE SCHOOL BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION THAT PRINCIPALS WOULD BE "FRONT LINE DECISION-MAKERS" IN THE SYSTEM. THIS COMMITMENT REQUIRED A REASSESSMENT OF EACH PRINCIPAL TO DETERMINE COMPETENCE, ENTHUSIASM, COMMITMENT TO SYSTEM GOALS, AND FLEXIBILITY TO CHANGE. THREE YEARS INTO THE SYSTEM I AM CONVINCED THAT THE RESULTS OF THIS ASSESSMENT ARE CRUCIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF ANY DECENTRALIZATION EFFORT.

PRINCIPALS MUST COME TO RECOGNIZE THAT SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT INVOLVES DECISION-MAKING WITHIN DEFINED PARAMETERS RATHER THAN COMPLETE AUTONOMY FROM THE TOTAL SYSTEM. THE TERM DECENTRALIZATION IMPLIES TO SOME THAT THE CENTER IS BEING WEAKENED, BUT NOTHING COULD BE MORE INCORRECT. DECENTRALIZATION REQUIRES STRONG GUIDANCE FROM THE CENTER THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CLEAR, MEANINGFUL, OBJECTIVES FOR THE SYSTEM. PRINCIPALS MUST THEN BE PERMITTED TO MAKE A REASONABLE NUMBER OF MISTAKES.

A CLOSE ANALOGY EXISTS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT CONCEPT AND THE STRUCTURE OF MANY CORPORATIONS. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE BRANCH MANAGER OR REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT TO THE FIRM IS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF A SOLE PROPRIETOR. IN THE LATTER, DECISIONS CONSIST OF A SIMPLE UNILATERAL DIRECTIVE AND THEREIN LIES THE REAL DIFFERENCE AND CHALLENGE OF SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT. THE NECESSITY TO ACCOMPLISH ESTABLISHED GOALS THROUGH OTHER INDIVIDUALS. SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT CANNOT EXIST IN A VACUUM.

SCHOOL BASED BUDGETING

AN IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTIC OF A VALID SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM RELATES TO THE ALLOCATION AND EXPENDITURE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES. A COMMONLY ACCEPTED MEASURE IS, ARE FINAL DECISIONS REGARDING BUDGETARY MATTERS MADE AT THE LOCAL SCHOOL LEVEL WITHIN BROAD DISTRICT GUIDELINES? THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM HAS DEVELOPED A BUDGET AND PERSONNEL ALLOCATION INFORMATION SYSTEM TO ENSURE EQUITABLE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR ALL SCHOOLS IN PROVIDING FOR A WELL-BALANCED INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM. THIS SYSTEM IS DESIGNED FOR SCHOOL-BASED AND ZERO-BASED MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS AND INTENDED TO SIMPLIFY FOR THE PRINCIPAL THE RECORDING AND REPORTING OF BUDGET INFORMATION.

THE FTE MEMBERSHIP FOR EACH SCHOOL IS PROJECTED BY THE DISTRICT FINANCIAL PLANNING AND AUDITING OFFICE AND THE OFFICE OF PUPIL ACCOUNTING. THIS INFORMATION IS ENTERED INTO THE

SYSTEM THROUGH THE CRT AND DISTRIBUTES DOLLARS TO INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS BASED UPON THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN A PARTICULAR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.

TO PROVIDE EQUALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN EACH SCHOOL, THE SYSTEM RECOGNIZES AND COMPENSATES FOR THE FOLLOWING SPECIAL ALLOCATIONS: (1) SCHOOL SIZE, (2) ABOVE AVERAGE SALARIES, (3) SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, (4) SPECIAL PROGRAM COSTS, (5) ABOVE AVERAGE UTILITY EXPENDITURE PER STUDENT, (6) AFTER SCHOOL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SALARY SUPPLEMENTS, (7) COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLANT OPERATION EXPENSE, (8) COMPENSATORY EDUCATION, (9) TEXTBOOKS, (10) STUDENT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, (11) REPLACEMENT OF VOCATIONAL EQUIPMENT, (12) COLLECTIVE BARGAINING SALARY INCREASES, (13) INSERVICE TRAINING, (14) COMPENSATION FOR PRIOR YEAR ENCUMBRANCES.

AFTER THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL RECEIVES THE REVENUE AND FTE ALLOCATION, THE SCHOOL BUDGET PREPARATION BEGINS BASED UPON THE TOTAL SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS INDICATED BY PRINTOUT. THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL DETERMINES THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL REQUIRED IN THE SCHOOL BASED UPON THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL.

ORGANIZATION FOR LEARNING

TO BE SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT REQUIRES A NEW KIND OF LEADERSHIP BY THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL. THE PRINCIPAL MUST ACT AS BOTH REGULATOR AND EVALUATOR OF WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED INSTANT INNOVATION OR RUNAWAY TRENDS, KEEPING IN MIND ALWAYS WHAT IS BEST FOR THE LEARNER AND HAS IT PROVEN EFFECTIVE. EDUCATORS TOO OFTEN ARE CAUGHT UP IN THE DESIRE TO BE LIKE OTHER SCHOOLS OR DISTRICTS. THIS ATTITUDE WILL INEVITABLY RESULT IN MEDIOCRITY.

OPEN-SPACE SCHOOLS, THE EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR, MODULAR SCHEDULING, ITV, INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION AND A HOST OF OTHER INSTANT INNOVATIONS ARE OFTEN IMPLEMENTED SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF TEACHER OR PRINCIPAL DESIRES TO HAVE THE NEWEST GADGET AVAILABLE. THIS IS NOT TO BELITTLE CREATIVITY, BUT THE "MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO" SYNDROME WILL NEVER PRODUCE AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION FOR LEARNING.

AT NO TIME IN THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION HAS THE DEMAND FOR POSITIVE LEADERSHIP AND EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT BEEN GREATER. THIS KIND OF LEADERSHIP WILL DEMAND LEADERS WHO HAVE DEVELOPED A KEEN SENSE OF INQUIRY. WHY DO WE USE ITV? HOW CAN WE PROVIDE MORE INSTRUCTIONAL TIME? IS INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION REALLY THE ANSWER? WHAT IS THE NET RESULT OF SPLITTING A CLASS PERIOD FOR LUNCH? HOW MUCH TIME DO TEACHERS ACTUALLY SPEND IN INSTRUCTION? ALTHOUGH THE ANSWERS TO ANY ONE OF THESE OR THE THOUSANDS OF QUESTIONS WE MIGHT PROPOSE, PROBABLY WILL NOT RESULT IN A NOBEL PRIZE, THEY DO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO STIMULATE INQUIRY INTO THE REAL "NUTS AND BOLTS" OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS.

ONE OF THE MOST FRUSTRATING ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY OFTEN IS NOT THAT ADMINISTRATORS DO NOT HAVE THE "ANSWERS" BUT RATHER THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE THE QUESTIONS!

THE PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

FINALLY, SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT MUST INVOLVE A MEANINGFUL PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP. DURING MY TENURE AS SUPERINTENDENT

I HAVE FOUND THAT PARENTS GENUINELY CARE ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN AND MOST LACK SUFFICIENT SKILLS TO ASSIST THEIR CHILDREN WITH THE ACTIVITIES NECESSARY AT HOME TO REINFORCE THE INSTRUCTION GIVEN IN THE CLASSROOM.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE EDUCATION IS A FAMILY AFFAIR OPEN HOUSES IN JACKSONVILLE, EACH PARENT RECEIVED A CALENDAR OF SKILLS. THIS CALENDAR WAS BASED ON THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS IDENTIFIED AT EACH GRADE LEVEL. USING THIS CALENDAR, PARENTS WERE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE WHAT WAS EXPECTED OF THE STUDENT, AND PROVIDED A SIMPLE HOME LEARNING ACTIVITY TO REINFORCE THAT PARTICULAR SKILL.

I CAN ASSURE YOU THATPARENTS WANT TO BE INVOLVED. OVER 60,000 ATTENDED OUR OPEN HOUSES IN THE FALL. BUT, IT WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED IF WE HAD ACCEPTED THE OLD STANDARD OPEN HOUSE ROUTINE. SURE THERE ARE ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS CREATED BY INCREASED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT, BUT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IS AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME.

IN CONCLUSION I SUPPOSE SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IS MUCH LIKE DEMOCRACY. IT MAY NOT BE THE BEST FORM OF ORGANIZATION, BUT IT IS CERTAINLY BETTER THAN ALL OTHERS. IT PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO ALLOW THE FULL POTENTIAL IN OTHERS TO DEVELOP, IT OPENS UNLIMITED HORIZONS FOR CREATIVITY, AND IT CAN BE NOT ONLY PRODUCTIVE AND REWARDING, BUT ALSO EXCITING IF USED JUDICIOUSLY.